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*Governor*

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**Holly A. Robinson, Ed.D.**  
*Commissioner*

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Dear Child Care Providers,

For years, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start) has been privileged to support the work of the child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies in Georgia. The CCR&Rs provide an invaluable network of support for parents and early care and education professionals at the local level and help Bright from the Start fulfill our vision of increasing “the number of Georgia’s children and families who have access to quality early care and learning programs...”

Bright from the Start has carefully reviewed data on every program we administer to ensure that the public monies with which we have been entrusted are being allocated in the most effective ways. Based on the data, we have implemented changes when appropriate.

A significant change we are making to the CCR&Rs is to revise the current CCR&R regions to align more closely with Bright from the Start Child Care Services regions. The current 14 CCR&R regions will be consolidated into six beginning July 1, 2009.


The consolidated regions will: 1) more equally balance the number of providers served by each resource and referral agency allowing for a consistency of services not in the current regional distribution; 2) provide better communication, coordination, and customer service between resource and referral staff and Bright from the Start; and 3) allow Bright from the Start management to more effectively support the resource and referral agencies to ensure that the services offered raise quality, positively impact children and families, and produce measureable outcomes that are consistent statewide.

It is imperative that we target resources and services to ensure that all Georgia’s children have access to quality care. We developed this new regional configuration using data on the number of providers, the percentage of providers meeting basic licensing requirements, and the number of providers with a national quality accreditation. Consolidating regions will allow Bright from the Start to work more closely with resource and referral agencies to improve data efficiency, to provide data that identify which services truly benefit children and families, and to target services based on regional needs.

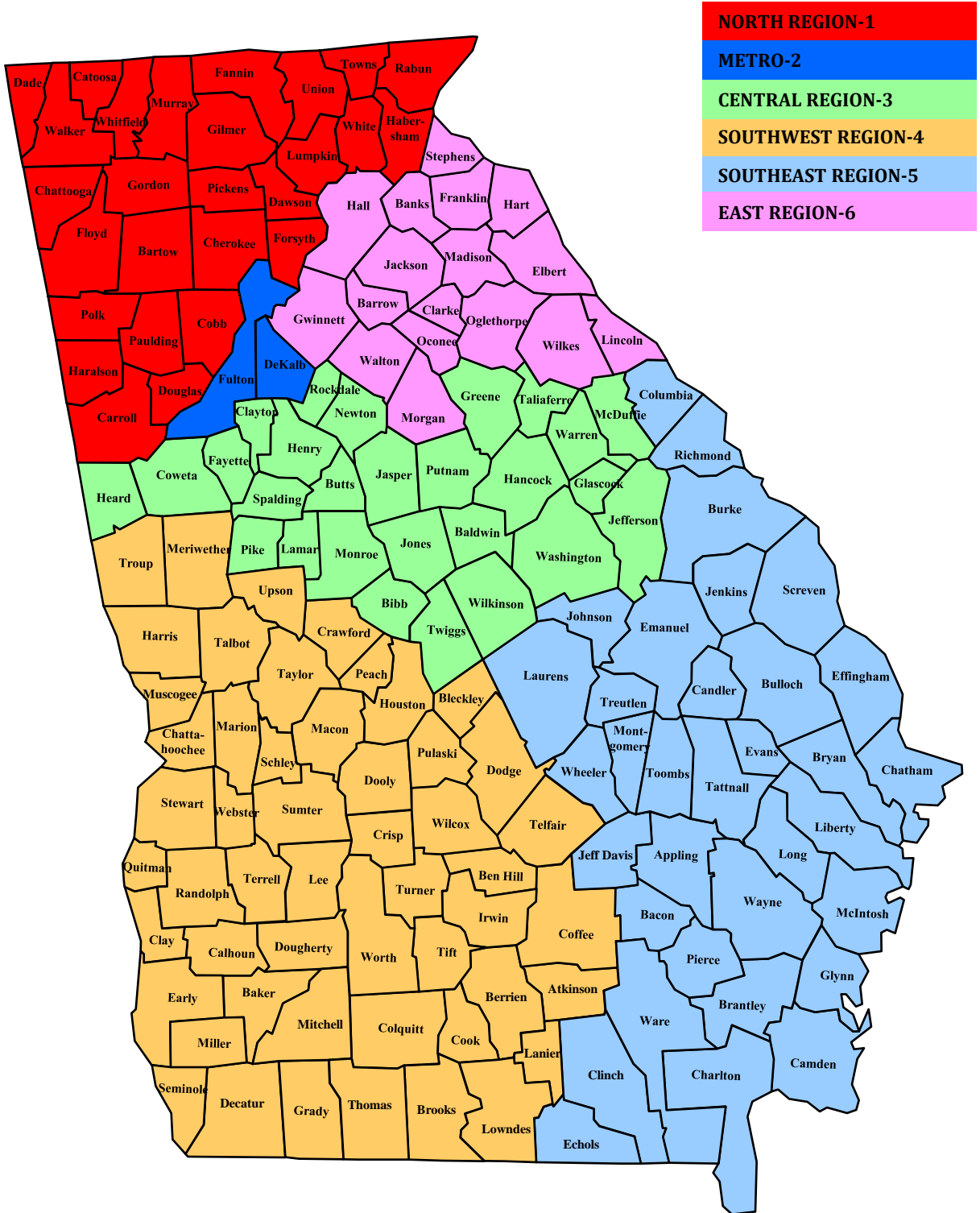
Another change affecting the CCR&Rs is the implementation of a statewide call line for parent referrals. Parents in Georgia will be able to call one number to learn about child care resources in their area.

Though the CCR&R service areas will change, the CCR&Rs will serve as a resource for parents and for you as a child care provider through training, technical assistance, inclusion services, and more. Together we will continue to provide safe, healthy, high quality child care environments where Georgia’s children can develop and grow.

Sincerely,

  
Holly A. Robinson  
Commissioner

## Child Care Resource & Referral Regions Effective July 1, 2009



## **New Regions for Georgia Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies**

As part of ongoing efforts to improve the quality of early care and learning for all children in Georgia, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start) has revised the current child care resource and referral regions to more closely align with Bright from the Start Child Care Services regions. The consolidated resource and referral regions will: 1) more equally balance the number of providers served by each resource and referral agency allowing for a consistency of services not in the current regional distribution; 2) provide better communication, coordination, and customer service between resource and referral staff and Bright from the Start; and 3) allow Bright from the Start management to more effectively support the resource and referral agencies to ensure that the services offered raise quality, positively impact children and families, and produce measureable outcomes that are consistent statewide. The following reasons support consolidating the resource and referral regions.

1. First and foremost, the regions are being consolidated to improve the child care services offered to children and families. Raising the quality of care for children in Georgia in all early learning environments while maximizing available resources to achieve greater accessibility is a focus of Bright from the Start. This consolidation allows more providers, families, and children to be served by the resource and referral system thus improving child care quality statewide.
2. Currently, the state is divided into 14 resource and referral regions, a configuration that has been in effect for 15 years. Some regions serve a large number of providers while other regions serve far fewer. Consequently, some resource and referral agencies have staff with heavy caseloads while staff in other regions have much lighter caseloads. This consolidation more equally distributes the number of providers in each region so that each resource and referral agency is better able to provide services that research substantiates improves and sustains quality.
3. The new resource and referral regions are closely aligned with Bright from the Start's Child Care Services (CCS) regions. This will allow for a more comprehensive planning and customer service approach between the resource and referral agencies and Bright from the Start field staff.
4. Bright from the Start administers the quality dollars from the federal Child Care and Development Fund. Resource and referral services in Georgia are underwritten with these funds. Dedicating 60% of the quality dollars distributed to external partners for 14 separate Resource and Referral agencies impedes the implementation of other programs that could improve the quality of statewide early care and learning services. Consolidating regions, increased use of technology and innovative approaches such as centralized parent referral systems and placing resource and referral staff in home offices will significantly reduce administrative and overhead costs and free more quality dollars to support other quality improvement efforts.
5. Consistent with Bright from the Start's emphasis to provide needed services directly to children and families, it is important to target resources and services to ensure that all Georgia's children have access to quality care. This regional configuration was developed using data on the number of providers, the percentage of providers meeting basic licensing requirements, and the number of providers with a national quality accreditation. Consolidating regions will allow Bright from the Start to work more closely with resource and referral agencies to improve data efficiency, to provide data that identify which services truly benefit children and families, and to target services based on regional needs.
6. Bright from the Start acknowledges that these changes are substantial; however, this consolidation will build a systemic approach to resource and referral services. This approach correlates with the continued movement toward higher quality early learning, focused services, and resource alignment that is consistent with the vision and mission of Bright from the Start.